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TITLE: Adolescent Risk for HIV Infection: Comparison of Four High Risk Samples

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Adolescents are an underserved and high-risk population for HIV infection. We sought to determine differences in HIV-risk behavior among adolescents sampled from a drug treatment center, a detention facility, two homeless shelters, and youth sampled from a predominately African American community.

METHODS: Adolescents were assessed on theoretically derived measures of knowledge and attitudes toward precautionary behavior, frequencies of high risk sexual and substance use behaviors, and other

Psycho social factors implicated in adolescents 'risky behavior such as impulsivity, risk-taking propensity, and social support. The adolescents samples included drug-dependent adolescents (n=77), incarcerated youth (n =194), homeless and runaway youth (n =55), and urban African American adolescents (n =156).

RESULTS: Drug-dependent and incarcerated youth evidenced exceedingly high HIV-risk and less favorable psycho social profiles, with drug-dependent females reporting the highest levels of overall risk. Youth in homeless shelters were lower in HIV-risk and had more favorable psychosocial profiles than drug-dependent and incarcerated youth and were slightly higher on these measures than African-American youth sampled from the community. Gender differences varied by sample.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings suggest that HIV prevention programs for high-risk youth should be tailored according to gender and the specific type of high-risk audience involved.

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